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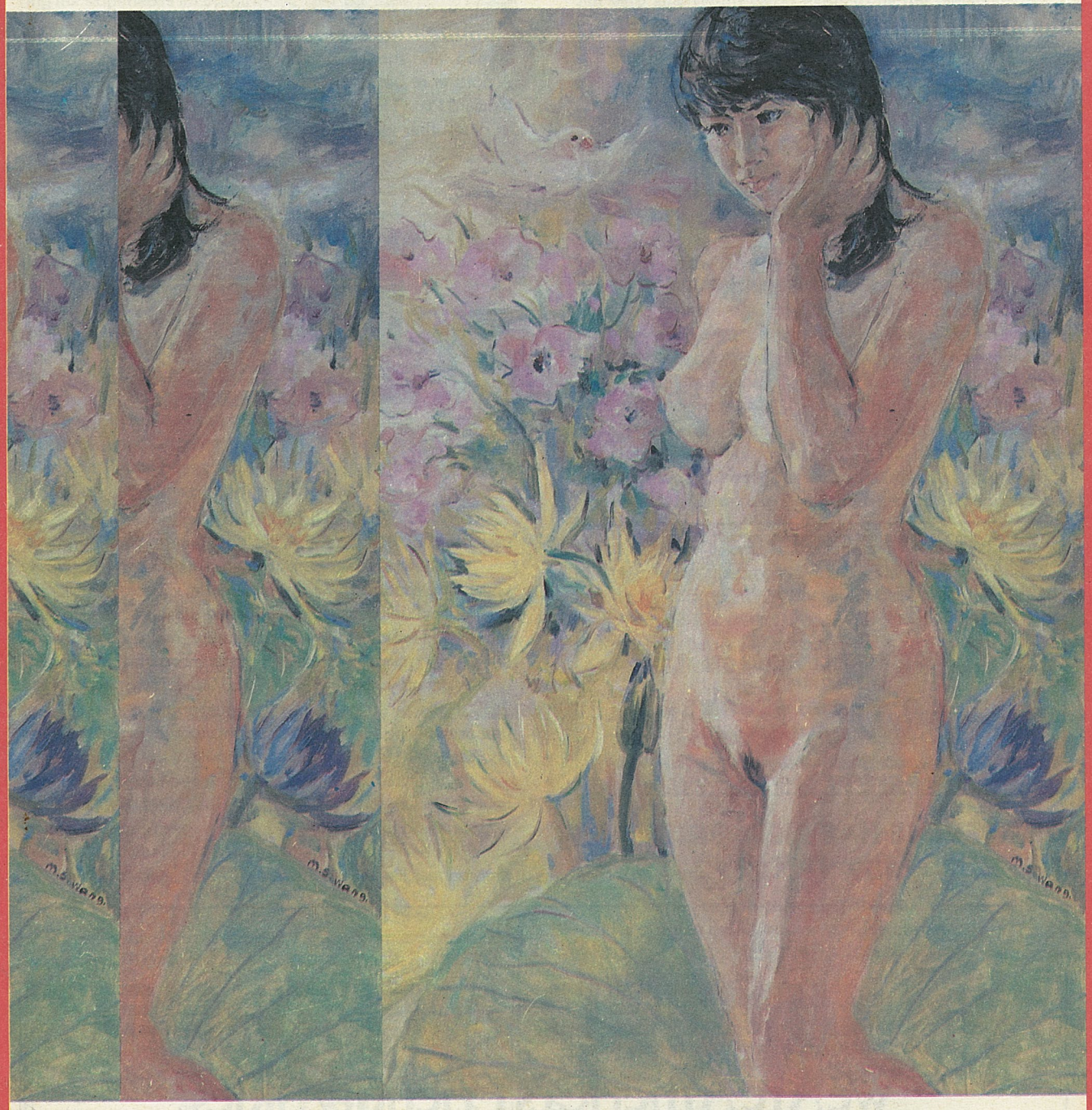
TAIWAN GRAPEVINE

A PUBLICATION FOR THE TAIWAN EXPATRIATE COMMUNITY



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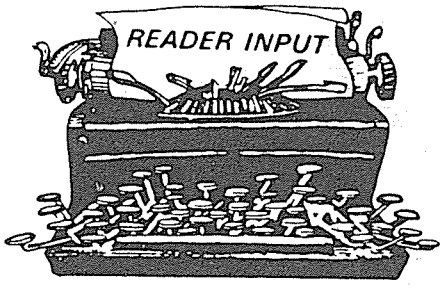
COVER STORY

The Little White Bird and the Nude

M.S. Wang is a local artist who has been painting still lifes, scenery, nudes and abstracts for over 25 years.

Her interest in art began prior to college and propelled her to a Fine Arts degree from National Taiwan Normal University. After graduation, Wang traveled to the U.S. where she continued her education, met her husband, had two children, and lived for eight years.

Wang's works have been exhibited both locally and abroad, and she has published two books on her paintings. A portion of her collection of nudes will be displayed in the Howard Plaza Hotel's second-floor salon, along with the nudes of nine other local artists, from Jan. 13-22.



Dear Editor:

BY WESTERN BULLHORNS (Dec. issue) was, as per usual, full of BULL_____T!!!!

Where does Messr. Dilling get his facts from??? An empty Gwai-Gwai package??? C'mon, Cyril, let's wake the fuck up!!!

School uniforms and haircuts are still in vogue with ALL school students whether they be primary, middle, high school, or college/university-private or public-coed or other. If you'd care to get off your bleedin arse and head downtown around 7:30 in the morn or 4:00 in the afternoon, and as long as you aren't blind as a bleedin bat, this would be as evident to you as a shithouse standin in the middle of the Sahara desert.

The only changes that have occurred in the past twenty years or so concerning the above are that the TYPES of uniforms and FREQUENCY in which they're required to be worn has been left to the discretion of the individual schools themselves; likewise for the length and styles of hair.

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Believe me when I say both changes were more than welcome. Previously, the school kids went around dressed like sumthin out of Hitler's fuckin youth league with their military khakis in the summer and their dress blues/blacks during the winter. And the bleedin haircuts that were forced upon them (girls as well as boys beginning in middle school), were even more ridiculous, i.e. potato heads for the boys and Buster Browns for the feminine gender, with both merely emphasizing the slopeheads and protruding ears that most come equipped with already. Keerist, mate, who wants to see that shit-a bleedin pervert, I suppose??? You wouldn't be one of those now, would ya, Cyril???

And besides, Cyril, who in bleedin H ever said that NO uniforms and long hair doth a bad lad/lass make, must have their head up the same place as Grapevine-that lil ole niche where the sun ne'er shines. Amen

Joseph P. Hardick
Ass't Prof., Gynecology
Minchuan Commercial College

Sing-along!

Anybody here seen my old friend Ferdinand?
Can you tell me where he's gone?
I thought I saw I saw him walkin' on over that hill
With Adolph, Benito, and the Shah of Iran.

Come gather 'round, hippies, in your suits and your ties
And admit everything that you told us was lies.
While we sold our souls for what you idealized
Swiss bank accounts you were arrangin'.
Then you cast us out cold like shit for the flies,
For the times were never a-changin'.

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SEA-AIR SYSTEMS– TAIWAN TO EUROPE VIA DUBAI

by Walter Specht

At certain airports, primarily those that are located at the end of airline routes, a great deal of import cargo is handled, but very little return cargo exists to fill the planes.

To remedy the situation of aircraft returning empty to their home bases, a sea-air system was begun about seven years ago in Vancover and Seattle, two points that accepted a large amount of imported cargo, but which had relatively little outbound cargo. Goods from Japan and Korea, destined for Europe were seafreighted to these places, transferred to aircraft and then flown to European destinations. The system proved very successful and was implemented in the Middle Eastern country of Dubai for Europe-bound cargo from Taiwan.

Dubai in the Persian Gulf was chosen because it fulfilled the qualifications of being at the end of many air routes, having a well-functioning deep water harbor, enough warehousing, experienced transit agents, and customs authorities that were willing to cooperate in order to make such a system work.

Several times a week, vessels leave Taiwan for Dubai, with transit periods of 14-15 days. In Dubai, transit handling takes 1-2 days and flight time to major European airports adds another 1/2 day. This maximum 17 1/2-day period is about 10 days shorter than regular seafreight from Taiwan to Europe and almost 1/2 the cost of splitcharter air-consolidation rates for direct aircargo from Taipei to Europe.

In addition to being more time and cost efficient, sea-air shipping avoids the problem of offloading in coastal ports and having to truck to major European distribution centers.

Although this system is convenient, there are some things that need to be remembered:

- Export documentation must be made out for seafreight export,
- Export customs clearance and trucking to Keelung harbor (small shipments are too expensive),
- A document similar to a house-airwaybill must be issued by the forwarder and contain the same shipping conditions that are listed in the LC,
- Only forwarders that have general insurance for this system should be used (seafreight liability is much less than airfreight liability), and
- Proper export pack- 'ng should be used, with the sender insisting on a weight certificate at the ocean terminal (shipping lines normally don't weigh cargo, prefering to go by volume measure).

The success of the system has been proven and today this transport mode is well accepted in Taiwan by both customers and forwarders active in Taiwan-Europe trade.

QUOTABLE QUOTE

When men praised the peacock for his tail, the birds cried out "Look at his legs!, and what a voice!"

JAPANESE PROVERB

BYE-THE-BYE

NEW YEAR ISSUE

The managing editor of this magazine, who is also the chief writer, sales executive, delivery boy and all around handyman, had to return recently to the United States. Prior to leaving our lush, polluted shores, he asked if yours truly would mind organizing the magazine and making sure that it got published, more or less on time.

Since I am an avid fan of the Grapevine and sometime contributor, I agreed to assist to the best of my ability. However, with a full-time job and commission to write the Taiwan section of a soon-to-be-published travel guide to Taiwan, Singapore, Hongkong and Korea, I discovered that the job was much more than this person could handle alone. I, therefore, contacted a number of the foremost writers on the island and asked for their assistance. They have obliged and this New Year issue is the result.

All of us hope that you find the magazine entertaining and look forward to hearing your comments. If there are changes you would like to see or additions, especially information that is of use to the expatriate community, please don't hesitate to pass them along to us.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the following writers for their gracious contributions, without which this magazine would not now be in your hands:

Mr. Tim Scott, Mr. Archibald Hellbender, Mr. Steve Wolfe, Mr. John Westbrook, Mr. Michael O'Connor, Mr. Sean Delaney, Mr. Walter Specht, and Mr. T.N. Woof.

Confessions of a Zen Reject

The following is excerpted from Confessions of a Zen Reject by Steve Wolfe in which the author chronicles his three-year zen practice at Daitokuji Temple in Kyoto, Japan. The *zendo* is the meditation hall in a zen temple; *sanzen* is the meeting with the master to discuss the student's progress in answering a *koan*, a question which must be approached from every possible non-analytical angle. *Seiza* is the kneeling position with legs tucked under the buttocks.

Cats and Dogs

"Meet the Buddha, kill the Buddha," Ralph Seeker proclaimed, certain that the master would be duly impressed by the profundity of this answer to his *koan*.

A long silence followed; a silence that seemed like that at the onset of the Ice Age, when glaciers entombed the earth, when powerful dinosaurs perished in the brutal yin of cold.

Trickling up from the bowels of the silence, a chuckle. Then an arpeggio of guffaws building to a crescendo of giggling which in turn snowballed into howling, rip-roaring, back-slapping, foot-stomping laughter.

"Meet the Buddha, kill the Buddha"? asked the master incredulously, catching his breath.

"Yes," Ralph said, feeling himself walking across a winter lake in thaw.

"When a cat wants something it claws the ground," the master said, becoming a cat and clawing the ground. "Cats don't conceptualize, don't spill their seed."

He hunched up his back and rubbed it against the wall. "Miaoooooooo, miaoooooooo." He sprung over to an imaginary bowl of water and began lapping; his curled tongue darting in and out in furious thrusts. "Purrrrrrrrrrrrr." Ralph's eyes were blazing as he stared at the bizarre scene unfolding before him.

Ralph realized that these meetings with the master would remain superficial if his inhibitions continued to rule him. He suddenly disentangled his legs, sprang to all fours and began to growl. He circled the cat, parrying and thrusting in irregular bursts. "Grrrrrrrrrrrrrrr." He contorted his face in primordial dog-eat-cat hostility.

The cat backed into the corner, planted its haunches firmly for impending battle and raised razor-sharp front claws. "Hsssssssssss." It seemed to churn up all the latent venom of nine lives into one pulsating fragment of time. Ralph was sure he saw the cat's fur standing on end.

"Grrrrrrrrrrrrrr. Arf, arf, arf, grrrrrrrrrrrr."

"Hsssssssss."

As sudden as the affects of a Cinderella midnight, the cat reverted back to its incarnation of the master.

Ralph thought he saw a trace of a smile on the master's face. The cramped space of the master's three *tatami* had been the stage for a startling drama, of which Ralph had been the surprise, guest protagonist. He realized how this tiny cubicle held magical potential; he felt he had taken a magic carpet to an unexplored dimension of himself. He wondered what other inner realms were lying fallow, wanting exploration.

Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle. The master shook the handbell that dismissed one student and summoned the next.

As Ralph walked back to the *zendo*, he felt unusually calm, as if he had chipped away some of the ice that stood hard between himself and the teachings of zen. He knew the ice was not broken, but just slightly cracked. He hoped if he craned his neck and peered from the best angles, he might catch a glimpse. At any rate, the shadowy refracted form seemed a little more distinct.

The last student finished *sanzen* and the closing sutras were chanted. As the first rush of night air stormed in through the opening front door, Ralph noticed something in one of his carefully positioned shoes. He swooped down on it like a hungry prospector spotting a gold nugget in his rusty pan. It was an envelope with a letter inside.

Ralph slipped it into his back pocket and skulked off to a sheltered spot down the road from the front gate. He wondered if it were an invitation from the luscious woman who sat near him and often wrecked his meditation by causing his mind to dwell on entering her sacred gate. Under the crescent moon of that crisp autumn night he squinted to decipher the terse content:

"Meet the Buddha, kill the Buddha."

The Poetics of Mud

Late autumn rain starts and stops, starts and stops for days, enveloping Kyoto in a dripping, tender mist; myriad drops beading on the silk-smooth skins of fiery persimmons. Ralph heard the rain falling on the temple roof as he tried to formulate what he would say this night to the master in *sanzen*. For a week he tried to examine, dissect, rape, canonize and comprehend "The One." At this moment its essence seemed galaxies away.

Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle. The head monk, kneeling on a

straw mat, struck the gong and slipped out of the *zendo* into the night like an apparition. Randy leaped down from his meditation cushion on the platform and took the vacated spot in order to see the master next. The monk was in there for light years, or so it seemed to Ralph as he grappled with the pain of his legs in the lotus position. At least tonight there were no sounds of fierce battle emanating from the master's chamber.

Finally the bell's tingle once again tickled the night air and Randy pounded out his retort. "Here I come asshole, ready or not!" he seemed to announce. Ralph furtively shifted his eyes from side to side to see if anyone was stirring to take Randy's place in the sanzen on-deck circle. He saw no activity and scurried down to the mat and assumed the *seiza* position. He didn't know what he was going to say, but he sure as hell was going to say it.

As Ralph waited for the signal he became lost in the sound of the rain raging down upon the temple roof. He could hear the rain race through the gutters at the edges of the roof, down through the bamboo tubes and finally come swiftly sloshing into the sand of the rock garden. He thought the rock garden must be especially beautiful with puddles surrounding the asymmetrical hunks of stone. He wished he could romp barefoot in the soothing swill of the soggy sand.

The rain subsided, and Ralph became aware of the sound, taste and smell of pain. His legs felt like giant pin cushions pierced by needles and pins of all sizes. What was Randy doing in there? Were they having tea and discussing current events? Ralph caught himself dozing off and took a deep breath to snap out of the hypnotic torpor that was aided and abetted by the softly flickering candle flame.

Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle.

In order to straighten up, Ralph shook his head like a swimmer shaking water from his eyes and hair. He remembered the fiasco of his first sanzen and slowly disentangled his legs from under him. He waited for the first current of blood to surge through his legs before he put any weight on them. He quickly massaged his thighs and calves with clenched fists and then stood up. He was wobbly, but in control. He still, however, did not know what he was going to say. Where **did** the one come from?

As he walked from the mat out the *zendo* to the garden, he was surprised at how calm he felt. Soft rain fell on his glasses, blurring his vision, adding a surreal, phantasmagoric quality to the stroll to the master's room. He took care not to trudge through any of the rivers of mud that snaked across the garden; he felt like a kid playing hopscotch. That was it! He would simply relate the physical sensations he experienced on the short march to *sanzen*. The rain, the mud, the night air...

He arrived at the foot of the master's room and began taking off his sandals. There were spots of mud splattered on his toes and ankles; he wiped them on his jeans. He stepped up to the edge of the master's room and, before bowing, caught a glimpse of him sitting there; he seemed like a sack of laundry hunched up in robes.

"My name is Ralph Seeker. My koan is "where does the one come from?"'

The master opened his eyes for a split second, just enough to X-ray Ralph Seeker, and then seemed to return to the beginning of things.

"The autumn rain..."

Like a bolt of lightning, the master's right leg shot out from under the peaceful robes to within a half inch of Ralph's chest; it seemed like the wild kick of a demented Cossack dancer. The leg then pressed up against Ralph's shirt and pushed him backward. He felt himself softly launched through the air until he landed in a splotch of mud. He lay there for a few seconds before he realized what had happened. The mud was soft and womb-like. Ralph's first reaction, after he saw he was not injured, was to want to grab that skinny fuck by the throat and kick the living shit out of his zen ass.

He struggled to get his footing, but slipped back several times. His glasses were covered with mud. He began to laugh hysterically. From his vantage point on the ground he couldn't see the master.

Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle.

Teatime

Ralph had a lot of things to take care of today. He knew he was going to stay in Kyoto for at least a year; his tourist visa would soon expire, and he had to arrange for a cultural visa to continue his practice at Daitokuji. He needed a letter from the master.

After the morning's work in the garden, Ralph slipped around to the front of the temple and struck the gong. As he waited for a response he brushed the dust and shreds of grass off his clothes. The doors slid open and the master, kneeling, gestured for Ralph to enter. Ralph followed him to a room in the back that contained a low writing table in the center of the room, surrounded by massive, packed bookshelves against each wall. There were thick tomes of Japanese and Chinese Buddhist texts, and volumes of Sanscrit and Hebrew. Ralph felt assaulted by an eclectic brigade of wisdom of the ages.

"You want the letter, don't you?"

"That's right," Ralph answered, ruffled by the master's directness and foresight.

"I only give a letter to those who agree to stay at least a year. You don't want to commit yourself for so long, do you? Most Americans leave after a month."

Without waiting for a reply, he told Ralph to sit down and then left the room. Alone in the study, Ralph thought about what the master had just said. A year **was** a long time. But he knew that sowing needed time and this was one harvest he wanted to reap. He shook off the fear of commitment like a mutt shaking off rain.

The master returned with a kettle of steaming tea and two cups on a bamboo tray. Ralph somehow felt that a cryptic smokesignal was drifting up from the teapot. The design on the pot matched those on the cups; a fat, jolly beggar in tattered robes. The beggar carried a long, knotted staff with his worldly possessions wrapped in rumpled cloth flowering at the end. The pattern on the cloth was the same as that on the teapot and cups. The beggar was followed by a band of children.

"Tea?"

"Yes, please."

The master gave a slight tug at his right sleeve to pull

it up and out of the way. He grasped the bamboo handle of the teapot, raised his elbow to the height of his shoulder, and began slowly filling Ralph's cup, which rested on the tray.

When winter reaches that point of no return, and yields to the gentle current of spring, mountain streamlets slowly thaw and begin to flow. This flow is at first fine but steady. Such was the flow from the master's teapot. He concentrated totally on pouring the tea, as if performing open-heart surgery. After a few seconds Ralph's cup was filled almost to the brim. The master continued to pour. The cup was now full. The master continued to pour. A rivulet overflowed onto the bamboo tray. He continued to pour. A puddle formed on the tray. The master continued to pour until the pot was empty. The tray flooded.

The master gave the kettle a soft shake, like a man finishing up a piss, to make sure all had been emptied. He then placed it in the center of the tray and sat back in *seiza*, looking intently at Ralph. Recovering from the initial surprise, Ralph sensed the significance of this symbolic act-he had to empty himself, let his stale preconceived notions flow out.

The master dug his hand deep into the bosom of his robes and extracted an envelope with a line of calligraphy strung down the front. In the split second that the Chinese characters were visible to Ralph, they seemed like the slash of a sword. A letter and one blank page were within. The master bowed from the waist, raised both arms, and, bearing the envelope across the palms of both hands, offered it to Ralph. Ralph accepted it politely, returned the bow and withdrew.

Reemerging into the garden, Ralph saw a flowering rosebush shimmering in the sunlight. He was struck by the leaves.

TAIWAN'S TRADITIONAL OX MARKETS

Time was--and not all that many years ago--when one of the more common sights here in Taiwan was the oxen or water buffalo. Buffalo drawing ploughs or pulling loaded wooden wheeled carts were an everyday sight in the countryside. And even in Taipei itself the occasional ox-drawn cart was not all that unusual.

For centuries, the buffalo or ox was a vital member of the Taiwanese family, much more than a mere possession. And not surprisingly so since the animal contributed so much to the support--even the survival--of the family. Before the age of the tractor, the buffalo performed far more physical labor than any of the family's men--not to mention the women, who were considered less important in any event.

Because of the importance of the buffalo to the well being of the family, it was only natural that the buying or selling of an animal would become a major event. And accordingly, ox markets, where the oxen were traded, and the supplies and equipment necessary to provide for the animals could be purchased, became major events in the social calendar of traditional Taiwanese society. Almost every town or village had its ox market, with market day the high point of the week for the area residents.

As the ox or buffalo has rapidly disappeared in recent years, the ox markets, too, have vanished until today only one or two remain in rural Taiwan.

Of these, the largest is the market still held some ten times each month in the village of Peikang. Peikang, not far from Chiayi, is best known for its annual festival in honor of Matsu, the goddess of the sea.

Soon after sunrise on Peikang's market days the oxen to be sold begin arriving. In the past they would be driven to market pulling or being led behind solid-wheeled carts laden, as often as not, with produce for sale. Today, they are more likely to arrive in the rear of a four-wheel drive Datsun or Toyota pickup truck.

By nine or so any animals to be sold have usually arrived, and booths and stalls selling harnesses and yokes, ropes, farm equipment and general products of all kinds have sprung up and are open for business. Other stalls offer foods and snacks of all kinds. On most days, there are a number of hawkers selling medicines or health foods of various sorts. These usually hire singers, dancers and other entertainers to draw a drowd which will, hopefully, be tempted to buy.

But the central drawing card of the market remains, as it has always been, the oxen themselves. By mid-morning at latest, most buyers have spotted the animals in which they are interested and have begun at least the initial negotiations. Bargaining is usually carried out between the buyer and seller alone, but often one or both will receive encouragement or advice from any number of friends or from interested third parties who stop to watch the action.

Nearly always, before a bargain is struck, the animal in question will be called on to prove its strength and stamina. This is usually done by having it pull a cart from point to point within an area set aside specifically for this purpose. Often the task is made more difficult by loading the cart with logs or other heavy materials or by filling it full of volunteers from the watching crowd. Frequently the wheels of the cart will be bound with thick cords to prevent their turning and to make the job of pulling the load even more difficult. On the best of days, the test is enough to try the mettle of any animal. In the rain, with mud churned up by the dragging carts often reaching knee level, even the strongest buffalo are often unable to keep their footing.

Once the animals have been tested and the bargains struck, the newly bought oxen are made ready for the trip to their new homes. Most are wearing new harnesses, complete with bells and other metal decorations, a tradition that has carried over from the old days. A few animals which have not proven their strength or endurance will have been bought by dealers for slaughter. These are traditionally marked with red painted horns and--according to old tales--can often be seen with tears flowing from their eyes as they are aware of the fate that awaits them.

By early afternoon, the final bargains have been struck and the animals are on their way to their new homes. A few booths or stalls may still be open, but most have shut down and the market is over for the day. But in another three days, a new batch of oxen will arrive and one of Taiwan's few remaining ox fairs--a fascinating but rapidly disappearing bit of the island's historical legacy--will again be underway.

THE CHINGMEI

1)

South of Taipei
old hills go down
for the rise
of villas and apartments.

On Precious Bridge Road
buses, motorcycles
gear down so gingerly
to cross the bridge
cracked along one side
over the Chingmei.

Garbage swirls in the stream:
hapless boxes,
furniture parts,
plastic.

A rat scurries up
the riverbank
so intent on business
he doesn't know
he's scurrying up
a riverbank, a rat.
There are stars
coming on over the blasted
hills, and paler ones
over town.

But even the restaurant
where I ate last night
in "ptomaine alley"
(vegetables washed next
to the Japanese urinal)
can't put me off.

Open sewers, torn-up roads,
Chinese in funky shops and alleys,
the smell of human feces
in ox-plowed paddies,
dust, factory smoke,
a mangy dog or two...

These are the nutrients of exile,
detritus where the lotus blooms.

2)

The river, muddy blue, flows
slowly toward the Tahan Ho, and fishermen,
with fine meshed nets, keep
everything that glints and tangles in the sun.

Women, young folk hurry home
against the wind
down dusty Precious Bridge,
their low-wage work the competitive
edge of General Instruments Ltd.

I cross the stressed bridge
and head up the concrete levee.
A child flies a kite in wind
that's almost flying him;
soldiers stomp and jog
along in war boots; two farmers
carry bamboo-handled hoes
into an emerald lettuce patch;
and egrets, on a nearby rock,
wait for their water ox
to come out from his bath,
but that big placid ox
is just content
to sink up
to his nostrils
in the ooze.

In the green and high-hilled distance, the temple
of a thousand steps, Definite Direction, Chih Nan.

Then a solitary thrush
skips like a blink on the river, once,
twice, and returns
to bamboo bending from his weight,
and vents a raucous cry.

The Chingmei.

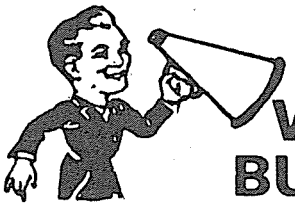
THE LITTLE NINE

The bus,
the little nine,
is filled with country women
and bundles of bamboo
shoots (suntze) on a Sunday
on the mountain
in a cheery-blossom rain,
windows all steamed up,
and that Taiwan lingo crackling
just like someone bombed Japan.

Women off to market:
ox tenders,
taro diggers,
duck-plucking Asians
(not exactly dressed for the Ritz),
gay,
nose-picking,
rubber-booted,
rain-slickered
wives of the earth,
rich in resilience
as they are rich in mirth.

And the bus driver,
convivial in his element,
talks and drives and makes a little change,
then puts us in a muddy rut-and whips
us out again.

The laughter rises and the poet sighs.
God loves the little nine.



BY WESTERN BULLHORNS

Censorship and Redeeming Social Value

or Henry Miller in China

I had been looking for a copy of *Nexus* by Henry Miller for about ten years, when a friend recently told me he had seen one in a local bookstore. I nosed around, and found out that a number of Miller books are now being imported by the Imperial Book, Sound, and Gift Co. [*sic*].

(Company names in Taiwan are another story, which should be saved for another time, but here's one that I can't let go by, and which seems apropos to the story at hand: Some years ago I saw a small van belonging to a certain "Lucky Friend" ( ) company. Only they didn't use the English translation; nor did they use a Mandarin romanization. They used a Taiwanese romanization, and there it was printed right in front of God and everybody: the "Fuk Yu Co. Ltd." I applauded them for their honesty.)

Anyhow, I hied it down to the Imperial, and found that they indeed are importing a handful of Miller's masterpieces. I picked up my *Nexus*. Ten bucks seemed a bit excessive for a paperback, but this was Henry Miller.

Miller, as any bibliophile can tell you, was one of the greatest authors of this or any century. The next time you hear a couple of Frenchmen talking about their great tradition of *belles-lettres*, tell them the greatest writer France ever produced was Henry Miller. If Diogenès had read a couple of Miller's books, he could have tossed his lantern into a ditch, lain down on the roadside, and died content.

I glanced over the store's other Miller offerings, and found I already owned copies of them. But then an anomaly struck me. They had *Plexus* and *Nexus*, but not *Sexus*, the first volume of the *Rosy Crucifixion* trilogy. This was confusing. Were Taiwan readers supposed to start midway — perform the literary equivalent of winding a video tape a third of the way through, and only then turning it on?

Out of curiosity, I asked the lao-ban-nia what gave. She said that some bureaucrat downtown had seen the title "Sexus", and decided that this book might be — God save us — *pornographic*. All copies had been impounded. Apparently the official is one of these *rarae aves* who can judge a book by its cover. I doubt he could judge one by its contents.

The decision was made over the *title*, mind you. Names, names, names. Form over function. Illusion over reality. Nothing in this vein surprises me anymore.

But several ironies struck me at the same time. First of all, *Tropic of Capricorn* had not been touched. It was right up there on the shelf. As I recall, *Capricorn* contains as much graphic filth (for so our bureaucrat seems to regard it) as does *Sexus* (what book doesn't, these days?). Don't tell him I said that, though, or it may disappear too.

The second irony is that I own two copies of *Sexus* — both of which were published *in Taiwan* in the good old pirate days. Has there been some policy decision that as long as the local brigands could make a profit at it, it was fine; but now that they can't, it's pornography?

But of course the ultimate irony is this: we are living in a city where in every other shop you can buy Chinese classics, Western pulp novels, Japanese photo books, and video tapes from anywhere in the world about anything you want — every conceivable form of conventional sex, as well as bestiality, paedophilia, pederasty, "vegephilia", "beercanophilia", you name it. These can be as graphic as you want, and as uncluttered as you want by extraneous plot, characterization, etc.

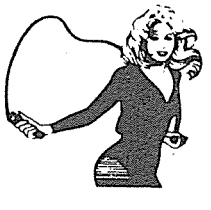
This is not to mention the thriving market for the real thing. I was reminded of several years ago when you could legally buy a girl's services for virtually any activity you wanted — *but you couldn't take a girl dancing*. That might break down the moral fiber of society.

I thought about this for several weeks. I'm still thinking about it. In the United States, his home country, Miller had to wait nearly thirty years for his "dirty" works to be published. Finally they were, because the authorities admitted they had "redeeming social value." Here, given the range of materials and services sold openly, the only conclusion I can come to is that *Sexus* must have been *banned* precisely because it has redeeming social value.

Ah, China. Ah, life.

* * *

For anyone interested, there are only a few of Miller's books imported, but there is an *excellent* collection of his works at the Tamkang University English Department library in Tamsui. They don't have *Sexus*, though. TS



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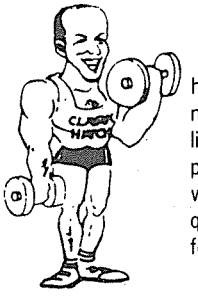

EATING HABITS COUNT

Besides adequate exercise proper eating habits are very important. Eat a good nutritious breakfast, a moderate lunch and a light dinner. Above all remember the basic principal of weight control is a balance between energy intake and output. You don't require a lot of energy after dinner so eat less food at that meal.

DISCOVERIES

Decent Mens' Shoes in Footwear Fashion Abyss

Taiwan is kicking the economic butts of the world's major industrialized countries with a slew of locally produced items ranging from CNC milling machines to canned vegetables, from sportswear to footwear.

But how Taiwan became so prominent in world shoe production and exports are enigmas to many male Western expats living here, given the sorry state of footwear fashion here. That is if in 1988 we can call zippered half-height boots, chunky "Cubano" heels, white sox with dark shoes, and other manifestations of cultural backwash, fashion.

There is nothing to be found here in attractive, Taiwan-made mens' dress shoes, unless you stop into a department store with NT$5,000 + for a pair of imports searing your pigu, or unless you call Icasport boat shoes dressy. Walk the streets of Taipei, Kaohsiung or Taichung my friend, you will see no classic loafers made in Taiwan. Nor could you see a simple lace oxford. Wingtips? Shenmo donghsi?

We have read over the years of thousands of containers of mens' shoes decimating the shoe makers of Europe and North America. Rumor has it that Pinochcio's dad Giapetto right now is begging his sustenance on the floor of one of Rome's train stations. Maybe we have bumped into the occasional visiting importer who says he is selling American-style loafers made in Taichung to Sears. Where in Taiwan are the presumably decent looking shoes which our kinsmen are reported to favor?

To the tourist or visiting businessman, this is of no concern. Nor is it to those with cushy expat setups allowing time and money to shop in Hong Kong, London or New York. Chinese-language students earning a living playing class clown/teaching native English in Taiwan buhsibans do well enough in their sneakers, sandals and what have you.

But for those guys whose last pair of decent shoes is wearing out or rotting out from under them, there is an NT$2,000 (about US$75) solution: Hsiamen St. This is Taipei's premier street for cobblers. One may either bring old shoes as examples to be copied, or shop until you find a decent sample in a window.

Most stores have a wide selection of leather quality and color. Most mens' shoes require one week to produce. (One artisan finishes a little fewer than three pairs per day.)

The main shoemaking area on Shiamen St. runs roughly in the 30's through 60's street numbers, and is just off Hoping W. Rd. between Chunghsin S. Rd. and Roosevelt Rd.

A shop this writer has had good luck with is ChungFa at 69 Shiamen St.

T.N. Woof

Easy Robin. We'll find another Grapevine for you.

ARCHIBALD HELLBENDER RETURNS

After quite a long absence, Archibald Hellbender is back. I happened across him while rummaging through the alleys of Taipei's infamous bar district the other evening and asked what had become of him in the last year or two that he's been gone from the pages of this illustrious rag. Well, it seems that Archibald did what no self-respecting drunk would dare do-he went on the wagon. Here is the story of a mighty writer's fall from debauchery told by the master of ribaldry himself:

The Seventh-Day Adventist

Bait and Switch

Call it morbid curiosity; I don't know.

I had been nursing a bad liver for some time. I had found that I couldn't take the grind of trade reports, market surveys, public relations consultation, and so forth, without drinking heavily. I was desperately casting about for something to do. I probably should have known better than to enter a den of Christians, but I randomly decided to check out the Seventh-Day Adventist Hospital's five-day quit-smoking clinic. There might be an article there, I thought.

Besides, I was struck by the irony of the possibility that I might, to the sound of my own incredulous laughter, actually quit.

I was met in the hospital lobby by an unctuously polite girl. "Are you here to quit smoking?" she rosily chirped.

"Mmm," I said, noting how gorgeous she was. She would have been marvelous to chat up in a bar with a few drinks under her belt, but I guess you had to consider the territory. Her smile was the best justification I had ever seen for the existence of the Christian church. But then maybe she would have had it as an atheist anyway, and St. Francis of Assisi would be the best they could do again.

"Well, you know you've made the right decision," she encouraged. "I'm really proud of you."

I stopped short of asking her "Will you go to bed with me if I actually quit?"

"I'll take you over to Dr. McDougal's," she said. "We're meeting in his home, so it can be more personal."

"*McDougal?*" I said. "The last time I saw him he told me I had to quit *drinking*."

"Oh really?" she said, as if she thought I was unsuccessfully trying to be funny. But it was true. About a year before, he had told me that my liver was like a compost heap, and that I had to quit.

"For how long?" I had asked.

"Forever."

His smooth young face had widened a bit when I had the crust to ask further questions of Doctor, but I had done it anyway. "Why? Is this condition irreversible?"

"No, not usually."

"Well, after recovery, will it be easier for the condition to come back?"

"Your liver should be able to recover 100%," he had said impatiently, as if I was wasting his time. "Just like anyone else's."

"Well why couldn't I drink then?"

"Because," he had intoned conclusively and triumphantly, "*No one should drink.*"

If their quit-smoking material was half as clever and crisp as this, I didn't want to miss it.

My girl led me to the immaculate apartment filled with literature about Jesus. There were rows of folding chairs set up, in which a few glum souls sat. I chose one. I began to feel as if I was among the guests at my long-dead grandmother's house, gathered to look at pictures through the stereopticon.

Five obvious non-smokers were acting as ushers and greeters, distributing forms to fill out and name tags we had to put on. They were quite adamant about that. The forms were optional; the name tags were obligatory. I wondered if St. Peter handed out name tags at the Pearly Gates, and if you wouldn't pin one on, you just didn't get in.

I glanced over the form. They wanted to know when we smoked, what we smoked, who we smoked with, how long we had smoked, what we felt about smoking, and on and on. But this was just the foreplay segment of the old bait-and-switch. There, towards the end, was the gist of the whole thing: "Do you believe that God helps people quit smoking?"

I finished the form and looked around the room. McDougal had shown up, and was strutting around in his handsome, bright, clean, upright manner, wearing a smart half-smile that betrayed the inner misery and futility that he wasn't quite aware of. I wondered if he ever would be. He studiously avoided talking to me all evening.

His wife was fluttering around observing what I guessed was proper decorum, saying things like "The bathroom is over there, if anyone needs it," and "If anyone wants some refreshments, we have water."

Three young boys, obviously McDougal's sons, were off in a corner in their jammies at 7:00 p.m. They were building fuzzy memories for their troubled adulthoods, gawking in awe at the sinners and reprobates that Daddy was going to cure and heal right here in their own living room. I don't know what trends will be in ten or fifteen years, but if they had been of my generation, poor old righteous McDougal would eventually have had on his hands a drug addict, a reformatory inmate, and a raving homosexual.

After a good while McDougal called the meeting to order, welcomed us haughtily, and introduced the president of the hospital. That hospitals needed presidents turned out to be the only news of the evening to me. It was merely a phatic gesture anyway, since he had nothing to say except that we wouldn't be so miserable in a few days, and that he had met someone once who had thanked him since she had quit smoking using the Adventist plan. Apparently this had impressed him a lot.

Then we had a film, a light comedy starring Tom Bosley, about quitting. The best part was Bosley sneaking into the can in the middle of the night to have a smoke without his wife knowing. He locked the door, turned on the exhaust fan, lit up, sat plop down on the toilet, and sighed "This is really living." And it *was*.

Cont'd pg. 13

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				(TUE) YANG LI SU	LIVE
				(WED) YU CHENG GING	LIVE
				(THU) HUANG YUN LING	LIVE
				(FRI) ZHOU HUA JIAN	LIVE
MIAOLI	1413 KHZ	14:00-16:00	TEA TIME	CORA TAO	LIVE
		16:00-17:00	BUSINESS HOUR	CHEN LING	LIVE
		17:00-18:00	ON THE ROAD	PETER CHANG	LIVE
TAICHUNG	720 KHZ	18:00-20:00	POWER PLAY	H.Y. YANG	LIVE
		20:10-22:00	MUSIC BOX	TIM & SALLY	LIVE
CHIAYI	1350 KHZ	24:10-02:00	STRAY CATS	ROBIN HUNG	LIVE
			SATURDAY		
		12:15-14:00	GOOD DAY SUNSHINE	ROSITA CHU	LIVE
TAINAN	1296 KHZ	14:00-18:00	TOP 20 COUNTDOWN	YEN JIN	LIVE
		18:00-20:00	SATURDAY CONCERT	RITA LEE	LIVE
		20:10-24:00	SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER	ISABELLA CHIA	LIVE
KAOHSIUNG	864 KHZ	24:10-02:00	CHINA SEA (NEW AGE MUSIC)	YU KAN-PING	LIVE
			SUNDAY		
TAITUNG	819 KHZ	02:00-07:00	BEAUTIFUL SUNDAY	STEPHEN WANG	LIVE
		08:10-10:00	LAID BACK AND EASY	EDDIE LI	LIVE
		10:00-12:00	COUNTRY MUSIC	CHIANG KUO-NAN	LIVE
HWA LIAN	855 KHZ	12:00-14:00	NEW FACES TO WATCH	LAURA CHAO	LIVE
		14:00-16:00	NEW MUSIC	PHILIP CHING	LIVE
		16:00-18:00	ROADSIDE CAFE (EUROPEAN MUSIC)	JESSICA LIN	LIVE
I-LAN	1404 KHZ	18:10-20:00	SWEET SOUL MUSIC	YU CHENG GING	LIVE
		20:10-22:00	BACK TO THE FUTURE (OLDIES BUT GOODIES)	LAN CHIEH	LIVE
		22:00-24:00	ALL ABOUT JAZZ	LAI SHENG-CHUAM	LIVE
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ANOTHER NEW TRADE OFFICE OPENS IN TAIPEI

Joining the growing number of nations and U.S. states that feel the ROC is of significant value as a trading partner, Alberta, Canada has made its presence felt in Taiwan by recently opening a trade representative office in the Taipei World Trade Center.

Managed by Gordon C. MacIvor, the office will represent the interests of one of Canada's most productive western provinces, and one which comprises an area of 661,188 square kilometers, with a population of only 2.4 million.

The decision to establish an office in Taipei was the result of a market study on Asia Pacific trade and investment opportunities conducted by the Alberta Chamber of Commerce in 1987. Major potential areas for investment and trade include petroleum production and manufacturing, forestry, environmental engineering services, agriculture, high technology and transportation.

For a resource-poor country like Taiwan, Alberta, Canada is an obvious choice as a trading partner since Alberta has been described as "Canada's energy province." About 67% of Canada's proven reserves of conventional crude oil are found there. This figure does not take into account the immense reserves in the Alberta Oil Sands. Ultimate potential oil sands reserves are estimated to yield 307 billion barrels of oil. Alberta also has 64% of proven natural gas reserves in Canada and 64% of total coal reserves. In addition, the province produces 11% of Canada's total gross domestic product and 17% of total Canadian agricultural output. Alberta-produced wheat is sold to 40 countries, and the province is Canada's largest producer of oats, barley and rapeseed. It is also the largest producer of beef cattle in Canada, claiming 48% of Canada's cattle and calves population.

Farming is another major Alberta industry, accounting for more than $2 billion in foreign exports annually. Grain and grain products are sold throughout the world, while livestock products appear in markets across North America, Europe and Asia.

MacIvor stresses that the main responsibility of the new trade office is to build economic bridges between Taiwan and Alberta. In the past, he notes, Alberta businessmen would fly from Tokyo to Hongkong, bypassing Taiwan. Now, however, many such businessmen are stopping to take a look at the possibilities of trading with Taiwan. And with the opening of an office here, Alberta now has representation in Tokyo, Hongkong, Taiwan and South Korea.

Currently, Taiwan is purchasing coal from Alberta and is investigating crude oil contracts. In addition, feedstock from the Canadian province and hides are big sellers on the local market. Also, Taiwan has just signed an agreement to purchase Alberta wheat.

In high tech areas, Alberta views itself as a complement to Taiwan, especially in the field of medical research technology, where Edmonton is a world leader.

Alberta is very enthusiastic about encouraging Taiwan investments, in particular the construction of petrochemical crackers and possibly pulp mills to tap the acres of virgin timberland.

Tourism is another area where Alberta hopes to see great Taiwanese participation. In 1987, only 4,000 Taiwanese visited Canada. When compared to the 200,000 that traveled to the U.S. any increase would be significant and the future is almost unlimited given the wide range of attractions and diverse unspoiled scenery that Alberta offers.

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Concrete plans for the trade office include a very successful "Alberta Beef Week" recently held at the Howard Plaza Hotel, a "Travel Alberta-Journey to Western Canada" tourism promotion scheduled here at the end of February and strong participation in ENPROTEC in March.

Also, this year the 3rd annual joint meeting of the Canadian-Taiwan Business Association will be held in Edmonton, attracting approximately 150 Taiwanese businessmen and 250 of their Canadian counterparts.

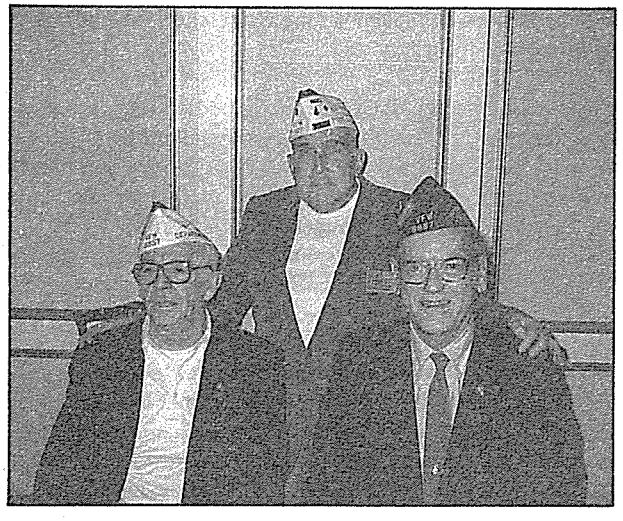
Further activities expected of the trade office are to develop the Alberta image in Taiwan, promote products, establish communication lines with local business leaders and assist Alberta businessmen when they come to Taiwan.

To sum up the presence of Alberta, Canada in Taiwan, MacIvor says: "We're here, this market is moving, and we want to be a part of it." EL

VFW AWARDS VOD WINNERS

Three winners from Morrison Academy, Taichung, were presented awards for their scriptwriting excellence in the annual Voice of Democracy contest sponsored by VFW Post 727, Taichung.

Each winner received a VOD time/date digital clock, medal indicating place in the selection order, certificate and U.S. dollar check. The winners were first place-Joel Trotter; second place-Jeannie Laturner; and third place-Rachel Sawatsky.



TAIWAN VFW ATTENDS KOREA CONFAB

Officers of District 4 (Taiwan) attended the mid-term Pacific Areas Council of Administration meeting in Songtansi, Korea from Dec. 1-5, 1988.

At the meeting, up-to-date information concerning the posts in the Pacific Area was presented and future plans were discussed. It was confirmed that the 1989 Department of the Pacific convention will once again be held in Taipei, hosted by Taipei Flying Tiger Post 9957. The tentative date is June.

Photo (L-R): Paul T. O'Dowd, District Service and VOD Officer; Larry Braley, District Commander; and Donald O. Webster, District Adjutant.

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Then McDougal introduced us to the hospital's young pastor, who was going to give us spiritual advice to help us quit. He had a smug set of eyebrows and grin that would have shamed William F. Buckley, Jr. He told us that the theme of the program was "*I CHOOSE* not to smoke." He made with the brows. "Would you say it along with me one time? *I CHOOSE* not to smoke." Most chimed in overly loudly, like eager third graders trying to get suck points with Teacher.

Then he went into the term "chain smokers": "I want to give that expression a new twist here. I want you to think of it as '*chained* smokers'." The brows jumped.

We had shows of hands as to who had been smoking how long and who smoked how much. Then he said "Let me show you something. If someone smoked a pack and a half a day, how many cigarettes would that be in a year? Come on, you mathematical geniuses." The Adolescent Psychology course he had taken in college was coming into full play that night. The mathematical geniuses in the group responded like trained seals, never mind that all of their answers were wrong.

"Well, let's just say that it's 10,000. Now let me show you something. Would you step up and give me a hand please?"

He chose *me*, for Christ's sake. I don't know why. Maybe it was because I wasn't becoming part of the group eagerly enough. Maybe it was because when I'm struggling to stay awake, the wrinkles in my brow give the impression of being interested. At any rate, I walked to the front of the room, hoping that my pants were zipped up.

He asked me to put my hands palm-to-palm in front of me. I thought to myself "If he asks me to pray, I'm going to say '*Fu-u-u-ck* the Holy Ghost.'" Instead, he produced a spool of thread, wrapped the thread around my hands a couple of times, and said "Now break that, would you please?"

I did, and thought "Now this is so bloody childish and obvious — are these people really eating it up?" After the third time of his wrapping an increased amount of thread, I theatrically strained and trembled, and said "You've got me, man; I'm hooked."

He recovered beautifully. "And that wasn't even 10,000," he beamed at the group.

He went on and on in this fashion, and I guess now is as good a time as any to say that these people *are* genuine and *are* trying to help, within the limits of their narrow cosmogony. Anyone who has quit smoking with their help has my qualified congratulations. But it's precisely this patronizing earnestness, this clinical superiority, this genuine condescension, that makes them all the more insidious. The Ayatollah Khomeini shaven, behind a white shirt and tie, with a Howdy-Doody grin pasted to his mug.

* * *

When he finished, we had an honest-to-god *juice break*. I was deliberately stand-offish, eavesdropping on conversations. "Have you ever smoked?" asked one of the group to a counselor-cum-imam.

"No," he holier-than-thoued, "I guess you could say that *HAVE ALWAYS CHOSEN* not to smoke."

The mathematical geniuses were clustered around the pastor, oohing and ahing about how "Everything you said was so true. I'm just like that myself. I understand now." I wondered if the only reason they had come was because it was free, while they would have had to pay Werner Erhardt through the nose for EST.

My girlfriend from the beginning of the evening saw me and felt a God-given urge not to let me feel left out. She moved over to me and began to make small talk.

She was even more beautiful than before. If anyone wasn't yet convinced of the Adventists' mental imbalance, all they had to do was ask themselves why this girl hadn't been canonized yet.

I didn't want to make an obscene play for her right there in McDougal's living room. I scotched the latent gleam in my eye, and used the diverted energy to work a contact lens out and onto the puffy bag beneath. This allowed me to duck into the kitchen to replace it. The girl was oh-so-relieved-and-joyous that it hadn't fallen on the floor, and I felt my vitals stir in spite of myself.

After I had replaced the lens, I picked up one of the folders about the five-day plan and flipped through it. It told us to remember constantly that we were quitting for our loved ones, and I reflected that it was *because of them* that I smoked in the first place. It reminded us that people who smoke a pack a day lose four years of life on the average, and that people who smoke two packs a day lose eight years. I reflected that this wasn't a bad bargain at all.

Then it got into methodology. First of all, we were to fast for one day. Thereafter, in order to be successful non-smokers, we had to give up booze, meat, spices, grease, coffee, tea, coca-cola — in short, everything that the Adventist religious creed says to do without. I was steamed that they would use such treacherous tactics to ram their beliefs down people's throats. I was just considering buttonholing someone and asking if we had to give up masturbation, blasphemy, glue-sniffing, pederasty, and necrophilia as well, when McDougal called us to order again.

He introduced another sharp-looking doctor, a real smoothie, who was going to give us a lecture about diet and how to avoid gaining weight after quitting smoking.

Cont'd pg. 16

Said one salesman to another. "I'm making a fortune, I've developed a new gimmick for selling ladies stockings – I put them on for her – it really works." "'I don't know," lisped the other, "I don't think I have the legs for them."

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MEXICAN CUISINE AT LA CASITA

One of Taipei's newest restaurants and the only one offering a complete Mexican menu is La Casita, located in the Kung Kuan section of town.

La Casita, owned by Amy Wan and chefed by Mark Findler, is perhaps the only local eatery offering authentic Mexican cuisine. Menu offerings include a daily special, nachos, hand-made flour tortillas, chips and salsa, guacamole, tacos, burritos, enchiladas, tostados, Mexican crepes and taco salad. To help make your meal more enjoyable, Margaritas and Tequila Sunrises are served, along with a wide choice of domestic and imported beer. Dessert offerings include freshly baked pie.

Entering La Casita, one is not overwhelmed by a Mexican ambience, as the restaurant is done up in what can only be described as a "Whiter Shade of Pale." However, the waitresses make you feel very welcome and produce a menu without having to be reminded.

On the Sunday that yours truly went in for lunch, the daily special was two beef enchiladas, rice and beans. This I selected, and ordered nachos and a flour tortilla to accompany the meal.

Service was quick and the food was excellent, spiced not too hot to allow for addition of the freshly made house salsa if desired, which added a special tang to the enchiladas.

Chef Findler noted in passing that all ingredients used in the dishes are as fresh as possible, and of the highest quality. He said that while working in a Mexican restaurant in Arizona, where he learned his trade, the chefs had impressed on him the need to make small amounts of salsa to insure that it was always fresh.

Future plans for La Casita call for continual improvement of the menu items by importing a greater amount of Mexican ingredients. Findler bemoaned the lack of authentic seasonings, fresh corn tortillas and jalapenos. However, he is confident that it will be possible to bring many items from Hongkong, where there are several very good Mexican restaurants. Also in the future is the possibility of relocating to Tien Mou or opening up another restaurant there. Either of these choices would, for me, be excellent, as the round-trip cost of a taxi from Tien Mou to La Casita was considerably more expensive than the meal, which, by the way, amounted to NT$245.

La Casita is located at: 2Fl., Ching Shi Plaza, 782 Ding Chou Rd. Tel: 341-5680. EL

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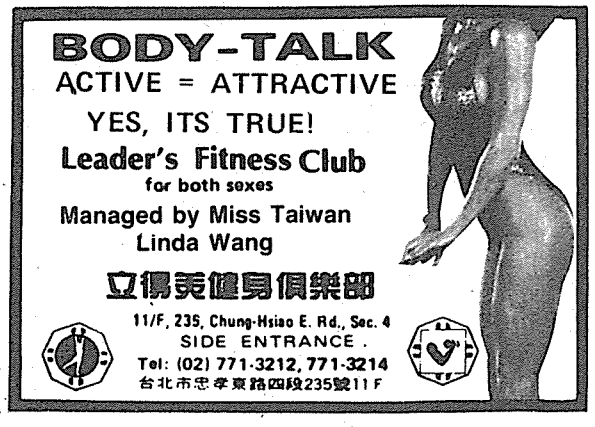

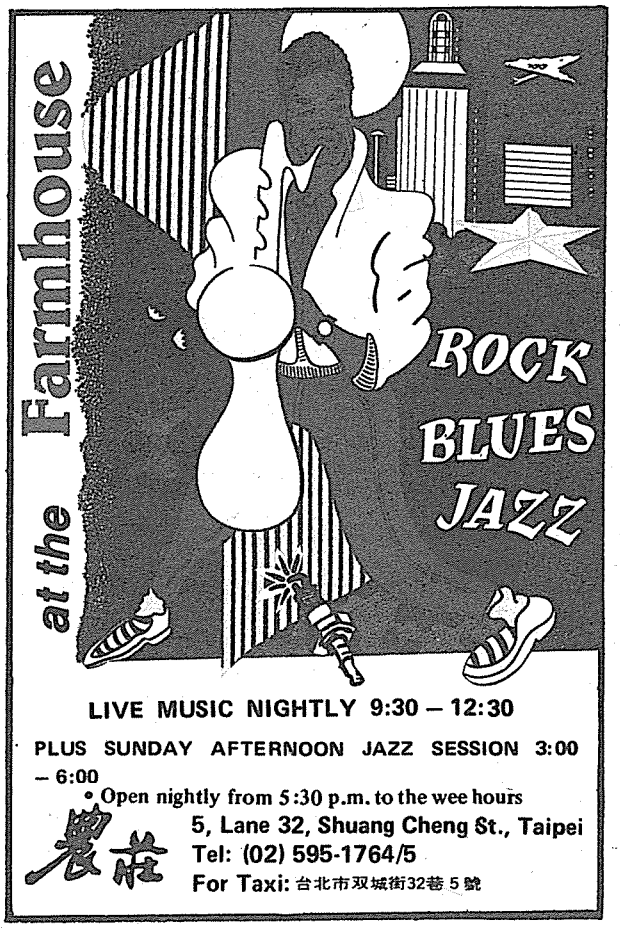
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HOTEL WATCH

Special Culinary Events

Hilton-January is a "New Year" with specials in many of the hotel's food and beverage outlets.

The Coffee Garden welcomes the new year with a "Curries Speciality" buffet for lunch and dinner, Jan. 17-31. Also, the Coffee Garden is offering a new a la carte menu for 1989 featuring the chef's Oriental and International creations.

During the entire month of January, the Hunan Restaurant is featuring a one-price lunch menu, "Chinese Menu Degustation" and "Drink of the Month."

Traders Grill ushers in the new year with a new a la carte menu, "Menu Degustation," 50-minute business lunch menu and other specials.

La Pizzeria continues its fine tradition with new menu items and an "Italian Casserole Promotion."

Howard Plaza-The Howard Plaza Hotel will turn five years old in June 1989 and is beginning its anniversary celebrations with a month-long New Year "Chinese Cuisine Festival" in the hotel's three Chinese restaurants.

The Pearl River Cantonese Restaurant is offering "Winter Delicacies," a selection of five special lunch or dinner menus priced from NT$666-NT$1,999 per person.

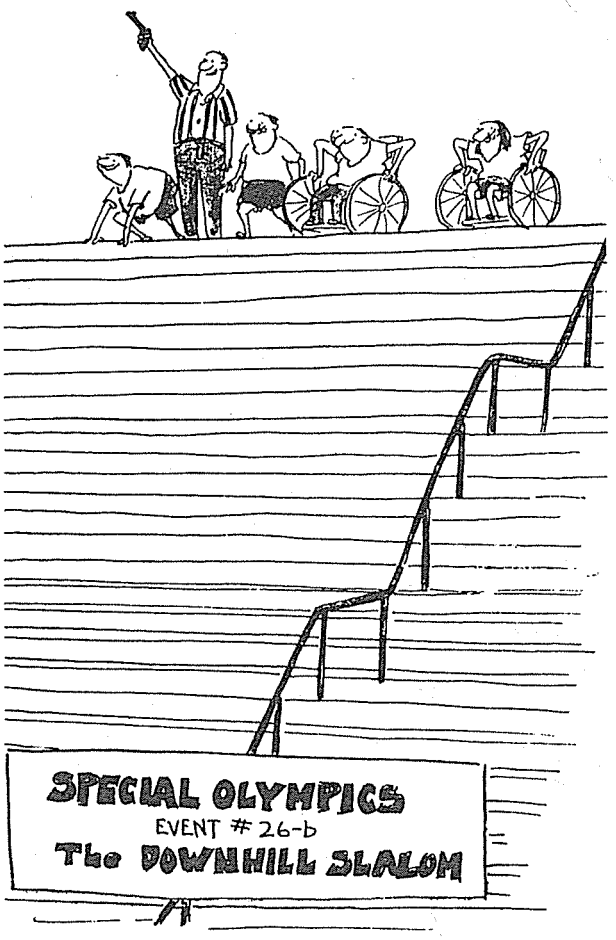
In the Yangtse River Shanghainese Restaurant, the chefs are presenting an incredible mouth-watering "Spring Feast," which features an elegant 13-course banquet at NT$20,000 per 12-person table, and set menus for lunch and dinner at NT$600, NT$800 per person respectively.

"Taiwanese Delights," a cornucopia of local selections will be available in the Formosa Taiwanese Restaurant during lunch for NT$450 or NT$600 per person and for a per cover charge of NT$800 or NT$1,000 at dinner.

The "Chinese Cuisine Festival" will run daily from Jan. 1-31.

For reservations, please call: 708-0507 or 700-2323, ext. 2300, 2047

The **Ritz** Taipei-From Jan. 12-20 La Brasserie and Paris 1930 will be celebrating a week-long Austrian Festival. Viennese cuisine will highlight the buffet tables in La Brasserie and Paris 1930 is featuring Viennese a la carte specialties. In addition, the Vienna Quintet will be giving afternoon concerts in La Brasserie and evening performances in Paris 1930.



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The lecture consisted of precisely what you have known about nutrition since fifth grade, except that several words were mis-spelled on the blackboard. The highlight of the presentation was a lively debate over whether the correct word for the evening meal was "dinner" or "supper". The know-it-alls of course were in no doubt as to this, and were not averse to enlightening the rest of us.

Stylistically, the doctor's lecture was a ballet of inarticulate stammers, mis-statements so severe that they were non-sequiturs, and a groping for words that I would have diagnosed as aphasia, had the meeting been called to help him instead of us. He would no doubt live to be 110 years old on such material, as a respected pillar of his community. I was destined to die at 40 as a shunned misfit. Still, I began to feel sorry for him.

When he finished, McDougal stepped up for the grand finale. "We're sorry, but we want you to get home at a decent hour" — it was just the shank of the afternoon to me — "so we don't have time to break up into smaller groups as we had planned."

I heaved a wheezy sigh of relief that I hoped wasn't too audible.

McDougal continued "Now when you go home tonight I want you to remember that *we care*. And don't forget our motto." He wrote on the blackboard "*CHOOSE* not to smoke."

Then his voice took on a spiteful leer around the edges. "We're going to ask you tomorrow how many cigarettes you've smoked," he said, "and then we're going to add them all up. Don't *you* be the one to foul up the count. And before you leave tonight, we're going to put a garbage can over there by the door, so if any of you brought cigarettes with you, you can throw them out right here where we can see you. And now, since God *does* help people quit" — all the cards were on the table now — "we're going to ask the pastor to lead us in a closing prayer.

The pastor gave God thanks for our coming, and asked him to give us the strength to persevere. It was a mercifully brief benediction.

As the meeting broke up, McDougal was all atwit because the garbage can wasn't in place yet. I left before they could find it. I only had a couple of smokes left, but I wasn't going to waste them in an insincere gesture to these clowns. Besides, I mused, even if a person was going to quit, didn't Christ criticize the man who made his offering at the temple ostentatiously so that others would see?

Outside, I noted with nervous satisfaction that the moon was full, and headed off to the bars to fulfill its wild prophecy. Two hours with the Adventists, and *I HAD CHOSEN* to fall off the wagon like an Olympic diver.

Expat Driver's Test

A. Simple multiple choice "no-error" test to let you know how you match up with the local cowboys.

1. When entering the north-south freeway, the first thing to do is;

A. Put on your left directional and proceed immediately to the left lane, drive at 80KPH and marvel at the light traffic. Optional: For seai experienced drivers, Don't use your directional; Experienced drivers, Use your right directional to fool the guy behind you.

B. Immediately note that the car behind you is using your rear bumper to check the condition of his head lights.

C. Wait for a speeding car, get in front of it, and let his tailgate so that the automatic cameras will photograph his plate and not yours.

2. If you're driving home after midnight, you should know that;

A. Most taxi drivers who drive at this hour only see red if you try to short change thea.

B. A traffic cop is hard to find because they are all busy downtown raiding the sex joints.

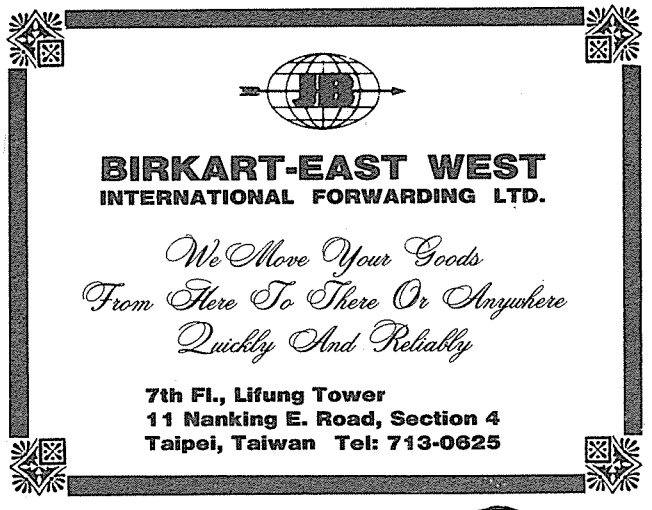
C. If you see a slow moving car ahead of you, the driver has probably passed out.

3. If you are cut off by a bus serging into your lane, you should consider if;

A. The driver will be allowed to chew betel out while driving on public holidays.

B. The number of passengers on the bus is proportionately inproportionate to the number of available seats.

C. If the driver had received over a 60 percent score on his drivers test, he would have his own tour bus company.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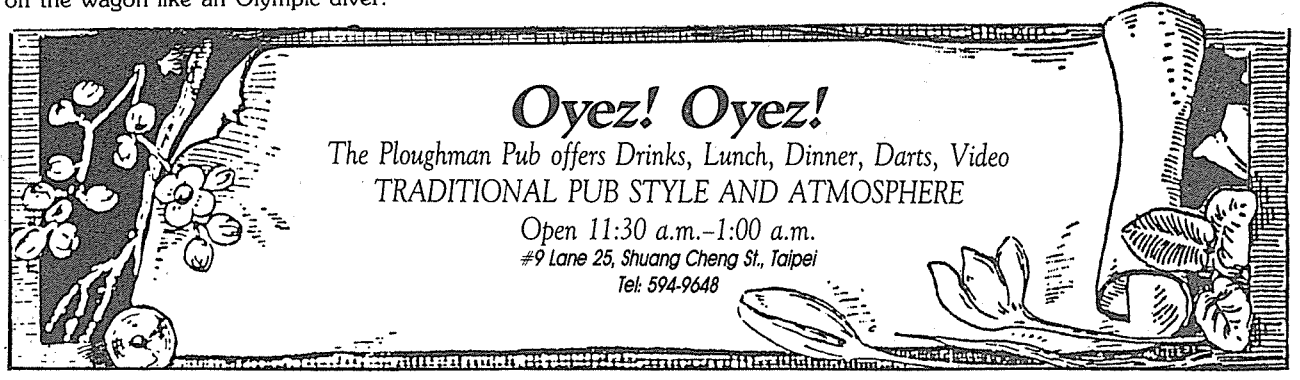
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Avoiding Hangovers

Alcohol first depresses the parts of the brain that control inhibitions, leaving a feeling of temporary well-being and self-confidence. The more you drink the more quickly you get rid of fluids. Hence dehydration. Lack of fluid causes a variety of different disturbances all through the body.

A headache is one of the effects of dehydration and can also be caused by toxic substances known as congeners in the drink itself. Some drinks have more congeners than others; vodka is low, whisky, port and brandy tend to be high, increasing the headache in proportion. Personal chemistry also affects the body's reaction to different types of congeners, which is why some drinks suit some people better than others. Aspirin substitutes are better than aspirin for a hangover headache; aspirin can irritate the stomach and make the situation worse.

Alcohol causes an increased flow of blood to the head, affecting the central nervous system and the mechanism of the inner ear which controls balance, thus making one tipsy.

Another complaint, red eyes, has the added disadvantage of being difficult to disguise. The eye is surrounded by fluid and with the depletion of this fluid, caused by dehydration, the blood vessels in the eye expand and the eye becomes bloodshot.

Good wine causes less severe hangovers than bad. Cheap wines of dubious origins are likely to contain more vicious congeners than their more carefully produced competitors.

Congeners cause hangovers and brandy, whisky, port, sherry, vermouths, rums (especially dark rums) and red wines (particularly rich and heavy ones) contain a good many. This leaves vodka, gin and white rum as the best bets if we are anyway determined to drink. The bubbles in wine (champagne, sparkling moselle, etc.) speed up the rate at which alcohol enters the blood-stream and make you drunker faster. The high acidity of these wines, such as in brut champagne, also intensifies the resultant hangover.

Tonic water or saccharin based minerals taken with spirits speed up the absorption rate of alcohol.

Here are a few truths, and remember they are only for those who want the best of both worlds, to drink and be reasonably cheerful afterwards.

1. Drink causes hangovers but less drink causes lesser hangovers. Drink slowly, dilute your drink and use small glasses.
2. Sweet drinks act faster than dry ones, iced ones more quickly than those at room temperature, hot ones have an instant effect which lasts a shorter time. Alcohol leaves the system at around a single measure of spirits, or half a pint of beer or wine an hour, and the stomach cannot, even when bombarded with juice, water or coffee, significantly speed up the process.
3. Most of the physical ills of a hangover are due to dehydration, but drinking soft drinks especially citrus juices, at intervals helps.

   Romans used to retire to be sick in the middle of banquets-a drastic but effective method of preventing a hangover the next day.

   Fish is reputedly good particularly, it seems, the herring. In some northern European countries soused herrings are combined with raw onions and sour cream or yogurt as a morning-after dish. "He needs a herring" is a German saying to describe a man with a hangover.

In Russia they prescribe black bread soaked in water for hangovers. (Black bread cleanses the breath.).

Others subscribe to things like Bloody Marys, bitters and assorted concoctions, but more seriously if you have them, try two B-50 complex tablets and 2000 mg vit. C before passing out. They ease the awakening misery at least a bit.

In conclusion; there is no quick remedy for the ailment. So, as Lord Byron put it: "Let us have wine and women, mirth and laughter... sermons and soda water the day after."

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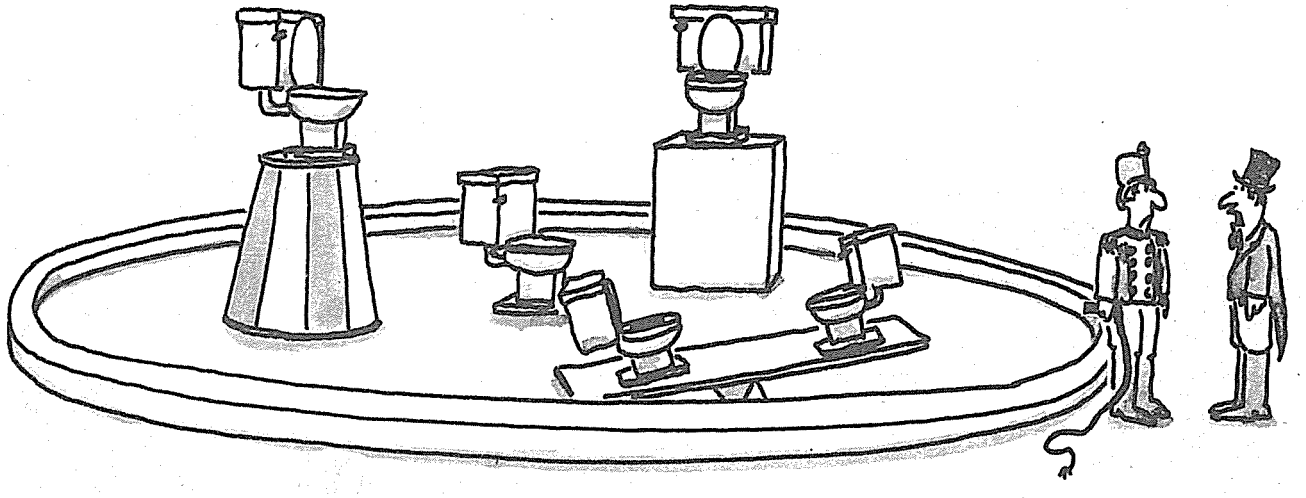

"It's a fantastic concept but the public just isn't ready for a toilet training act yet."

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ALSO SEE SPORTS SECTION

QUOTABLE QUOTE

Good advice is no better than bad – unless it comes at the right time.

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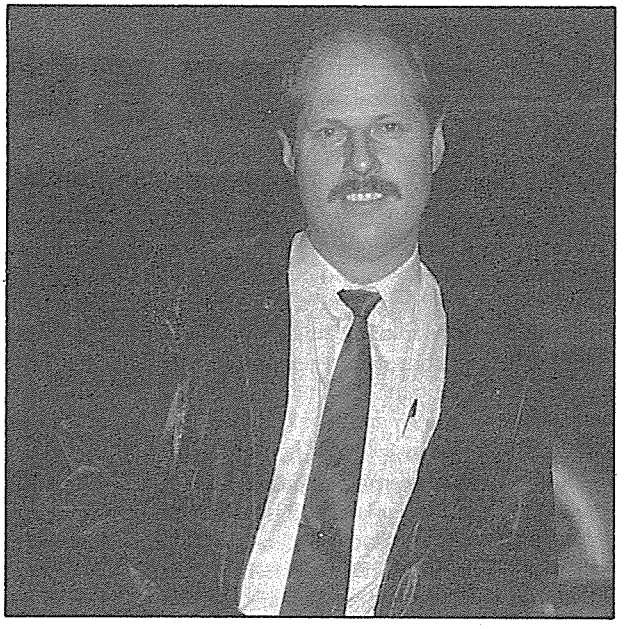

Little Big Man

By Steve Wolfe

Ed Little, guest editor of this month's "Grapevine," has, in his forty years, intensely experienced the fiery action of Yang and the shadowed introspection of Yin. As a frontline marine who participated in 17 major combat operations in his 13 months in Vietnam, he tasted of the tree of Yang. As a Buddhist acolyte, shaven head and robes, he dwelled in the bower of Yin.

Finding high school boring, Little (who ain't at a hulky 6'2") discovered, at the urging of parents, that it might be a worthwhile venture to join the military rather than face the consequences of too many curfew violations. That was a suggestion he found hard to refuse, considering the alternative was possible detention until the age of 18. So, on his 17th birthday, he joined the United States Marine Corps. He turned 18 in June of 1968, by September he was in a "free-fire zone," where his orders were to kill anything that moved. Little's recollection of Hue, a once Shangri La-like provincial capital, encapsulates his Vietnam experience.

"When I first saw Hue," Little says, "children were gliding along the countryside on bicycles, women with beautiful skin and smiles were washing clothes by the glistening river. The next time I saw Hue, as escort for the first truck convoy going in after Tet, I was shocked. There was almost total destruction of what once had been such a magical place."

Little, who eventually became a squad leader and attained the rank of corporal, had the first seed of Buddhist dharma planted in his soul by a prostitute in Bangkok. On R&R in Thailand, Little went to the woman's high-rollin' apartment and noticed an altar where she and her roommates prayed. Being brought up a strict Catholic and having attended a Jesuit high school, Little was at first astonished that "a woman who slept with men all day" should be so devout. "When I discussed this with her," Little explains, "I learned how open-minded Buddhism is. How it makes no judgment or condemnation."

"Real Hostile About War"

Little got out of the Marines in '69, "real hostile about war." In 1970, he began his long and checkered journeyman education when he enrolled in LA City College and became involved with the radical SDS (Students for a Democratic Society). Little's destiny with that period of his education was short lived as his involvement in radical politics precluded serious study of more mundane subjects.

"We got a call from the Black Panthers in Watts that the police had assaulted their headquarters," Little explains. "They asked us to come down and be visible as white people supporting them. After we arrived in the area, a group of policemen spotted us and came charging toward us swinging their clubs. As they were closing in, they saw an ABC cameraman filming the episode. So instead of beating us into the ground, they merely took us to jail for "intent to incite to riot.' We were in jail for a few days."

As many soul-scarred Vietnam veterans in those turbulent days of the late '60s and early '70s in America had done, Little went through a period of radical politics and experimentation in the expansive realms of mind and body. He worked at various times as a cook, a miner for Molybdenum at the Climax Mine in Leadville, Colorado, and as a maid in Aspen, also in Colorado. This period in his life was to wane as one day in 1973 Little discovered "HELP," the first vegetarian restaurant in LA.

Interest in Religion and Philosophy

"In addition to a restaurant, HELP also had a bookstore on religions-Hinduism, Buddhism, etc.," Little relates. "I began to study many Hindu masters. I was always interested in religion and philosophy and, from that experience, I went back to school to earn a degree in Asian Studies. After graduation, I pursued my studies and eventually met a girl who lived in the International Buddhist Meditation Center who invited me to try the morning meditation. I ended up moving in for three years. I took the vows to become a Buddhist. It seemed like a natural progression."

While wearing robes during the day, Little donned a three-piece suit at night to work as a limousine driver for the likes of Mick Jagger, the Bee Gees, Aerosmith and Rod Stewart.

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Little's master, who happened to be Vietnamese, suggested that he go to Taiwan and practice at Fo Kuang Shan Temple, 40 minutes by bus from Kaohsiung. Our young acolyte packed two sets of Buddhist robes, no Western clothes at all, and set out for these balmy shores. He was to remain at this southern-Taiwan temple for six months before temple politics, too much "Pureland" chanting and not enough meditation, and visa problems prompted his withdrawal.

That fateful day when Ed Little effected his unceremonious retreat from monastic life is firmly etched in the collective consciousness of a number of the staff at the President Department Store in downtown Kaohsiung. It was here that Little would bolt in, his bulk of a body adorned in saintly robes, and buy a wardrobe consisting of two pairs of pants, two shirts, a hat and a pair of sandals, the only footwear large enough to fit his massive foreign feet. He left the store in layman garb bound for a job interview. For the remaining two a half years of Little's tenure in this port city, where he was reduced to teaching English to earn his daily rice, each time he entered the department store he was greeted by howls of laughter by the staff who recalled his hasty metamorphosis.

Negative Experience?

Little wonders if it is not indeed a negative experience to have meditated often and then stopped. He likens it to "a weightlifter who stops lifting weights and gets even flabbier." Concerning the notion of shaving one's head and wearing robes to give up worldly attachments, Little has come to feel it becomes "just as much an attachment to the image of oneself being unattached."

The next stop in Little's transmigration was Taipei where he payed his dues as a writer/editor in the sleazy netherworld of the China Economic News Service (CENS) for almost two years. Like the other unfortunate foreign souls sentenced to suffer at CENS, Little always knew that any creativity would be stifled while he never knew when he would get his pittance of a "salary."

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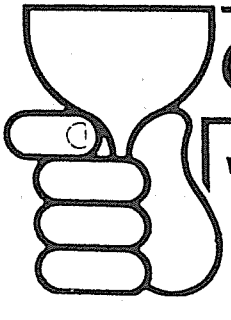

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Brighter times, however, have befallen Ed Little. His namecard now reads "Assistant to the Manager, Sales & Marketing Department, Howard Plaza Hotel," although Little defines his job more as that of a "media consultant." This international-class tourist hotel, coincidentally or not, during the two years that Little has been aboard, has earned the greatest share of profits in Taiwan's hotel industry and has been acclaimed by the New York Times as "perhaps the best hotel in Taiwan."

Little, who served as Commander of the Taipei branch of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for 1987-88, is interested in living and working in mainland China in the future. He and his native-Taiwanese wife have a son, Sean, three and a half.

The editor of a magazine inevitably leaves the imprint of his personality on the content, tone and layout of each issue he oversees. It will be interesting to see which side of Ed Little's psyche holds sway in this New Year edition of "Grapevine." Or perhaps the end product will be a balanced synthesis from the much-travelled sensibility of this former warrior/monk.

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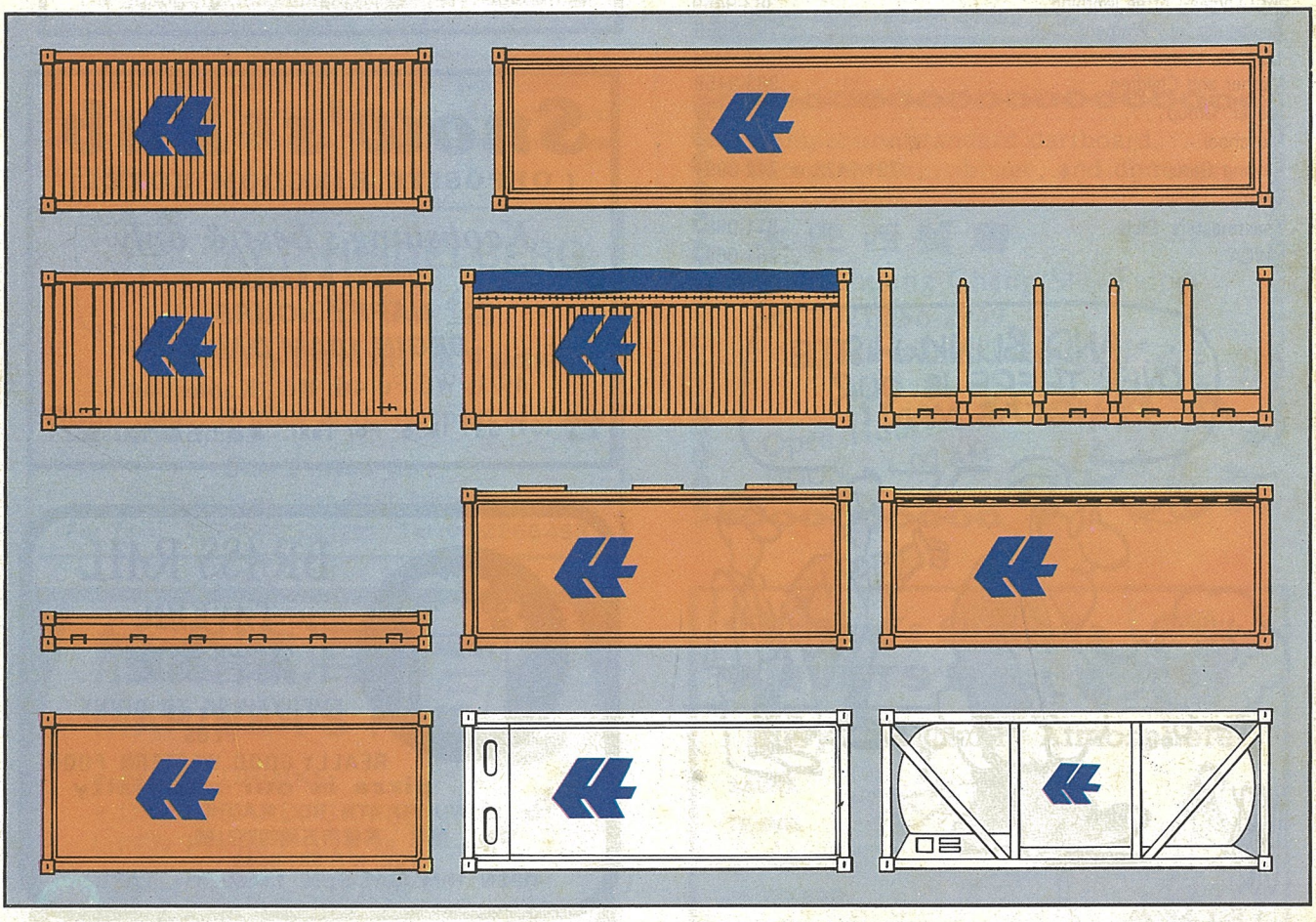

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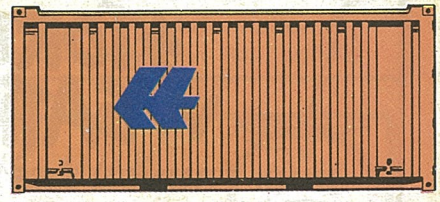

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